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Peacebuilding Commission

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Second session

Summary record of the 5th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 19 December 2007, at 11 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Takasu ..... (Japan)

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07-65199 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/2/OC/7)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Letter dated 11 December 2007 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission

2. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the letter dated 11 December 2007 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission. The letter conveyed the acceptance by the Security Council of a request from the Government of Guinea-Bissau, submitted through the Secretary-General, that Guinea-Bissau should be placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. By conveying its acceptance of that request, the Security Council was inviting the Peacebuilding Commission to provide advice on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

3. **Mr. Barbeiro** (Guinea-Bissau), speaking via video link from Bissau, said that his country would be proud to be on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda and was following the evolution of its commitments in Sierra Leone and Burundi. Although significant progress had been made in Guinea-Bissau since the end of the civil war in 1999, the situation in the country remained fragile owing to economic instability, budgetary problems, drug trafficking and organized crime. Furthermore, Guinea-Bissau needed the support of the international community because it did not have the capacity to exercise control over its territorial space.

4. The new Government, which had come to power in April 2007, had taken measures aimed at achieving economic, social and political stability and had established good working relations with international financial institutions. The Political Stability Pact concluded by the three major political parties in March 2007 had established the necessary conditions for the Government's reform programmes, while in November 2007 Parliament had approved the budget for 2007-2008. In May 2007, the Government had launched the Minimum Public Finance Stability Programme. In June 2007, it had prepared a framework to evaluate security sector reform, which included a $2 million provision from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to train 30 military officers. The European Union had allocated 7.7 million euros under the ninth European Development Fund and 8 million euros under the tenth European Development Fund to be used for training purposes.

5. In addition to ratifying the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the Government had launched a plan of action to combat drug trafficking in August 2007. The International Conference on Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau currently being held in Lisbon was the result of months of negotiations with international partners, including Portugal, the European Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations. The Government also hoped to participate in the ECOWAS regional conference on drug trafficking which was to be held in early 2008.

6. His Government was aware that the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the Commission's agenda would put the country under the spotlight and would help attract more assistance from donors. It looked forward to submitting its evaluation of priority areas to the Commission and envisaged the implementation of quick-impact projects in many sectors. It also looked forward to working closely and constructively with the Commission at the country-specific meetings.

7. **The Chairperson** said he took it that the Committee wished to take note of the letter dated 11 December 2007 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission, thereby deciding to place Guinea-Bissau on the agenda of the Commission.

8. *It was so decided.*

9. **The Chairperson** said that, on the basis of the Committee's decision to place Guinea-Bissau on the Commission's agenda, and pursuant to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 60/180, Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) and the Commission's provisional rules of procedure (PBC/1/OC/3), he took it that the Committee wished to establish a country-specific configuration on Guinea-Bissau, with membership consisting, initially, of the members of the Organizational Committee, with a view to further consultations within the Committee on additional members.

10. *It was so decided.*

11. **The Chairperson** said that, on the basis of prior consultations with the Government of Guinea-Bissau and members of the Committee, he took it that the Committee wished to elect Ms. Viotti, Ambassador of

Brazil, to the office of Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration on Guinea-Bissau by acclamation.

12. *It was so decided.*

13. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) reiterated his country's commitment to addressing the challenges it faced and its need for further support. By putting Guinea-Bissau on its agenda, the Commission was acting in conformity with the principles of the United Nations that called for support for countries in need and efforts to achieve international peace and stability. The citizens of his country deserved development and progress. They had struggled for peace and stability ever since gaining their independence and were ready to assume their responsibilities to their region and to the world. The emerging national consensus was illustrated by the support in Parliament for the policies of the new Government. His country would play its part as a member of the Commission, and looked forward to receiving the support of the international community. He was particularly pleased that Brazil would be chairing the country-specific configuration on Guinea-Bissau because of the strong relationship between the two countries.

14. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said that she appreciated the confidence that Guinea-Bissau had expressed in her country. Brazil had been among the first countries to recognize Guinea-Bissau's independence and had had an increasingly close relationship with the country since that time. On a recent visit to Brazil, the President of Guinea-Bissau had discussed new avenues of bilateral cooperation with the President of Brazil. Brazil was also involved in multilateral cooperation, along with other members of the Commission. She had visited Guinea-Bissau in the context of the work of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau in 2002, when she had gained valuable insights that would help her coordinate the Commission's activities.

15. Brazil supported the adoption of an integrated approach while taking into account the suggestions of the Security Council. She agreed that quick-impact projects would help consolidate peace in Guinea-Bissau in the short term. A mapping exercise would also be essential. Consultation with the Government of Guinea-Bissau would be central, and the experience of other States in the region, regional organizations such as ECOWAS, and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and other lusophone partners would also be drawn on.

16. **Mr. Muñoz** (Chile) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Brazil.

17. **Mr. Appreku** (Ghana) said that, as the lead country on the issue of Guinea-Bissau in the Security Council, Ghana had played a pivotal role in gaining consensus in the Council for referring Guinea-Bissau to the Commission with a minimum of delay, yet on the basis of more extensive consultation than had been possible in the case of Burundi and Sierra Leone. In 2006, within the framework of ECOWAS, his country had worked with Brazil on the establishment of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau. Thanks to the efforts of the Contact Group, the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and the Security Council, Guinea-Bissau was finally on the Commission's agenda. The priorities listed in the Security Council's letter were the result of a compromise and were not exhaustive; there was room for the Commission to go beyond them in formulating a strategy for Guinea-Bissau.

18. **Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola) said that the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the Commission's agenda was a positive note on which to end the year 2007. The decision had been taken in a timely fashion, thanks in part to the active role played by African members of the Security Council. He hoped that the Government of Guinea-Bissau would be invited to help map priorities as soon as possible. Quick-impact projects were also crucial to building immediate confidence.

19. **Mr. Doraiswami** (India) said that his delegation looked forward to receiving Guinea-Bissau's list of priorities, particularly since the Commission might go beyond the priorities listed in the Security Council's letter. The mapping process and quick-impact projects should be started as soon as possible, and resources should be allocated without delay.

20. **Mr. Ahmad** (Pakistan) said that the Commission must focus on the issues highlighted by the delegation of Guinea-Bissau, including the need for development, socio-economic recovery and quick-impact projects. The 90-day deadline suggested by the Security Council for the provision of the Commission's initial advice was out of place, given that it had taken the Security Council 150 days to respond to Guinea-Bissau's urgent request to be placed on the Commission's agenda.

Nonetheless, he was confident that the Commission would be able to meet that deadline.

21. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) welcomed Guinea-Bissau's national consensus, its recognition of the need for reform and its willingness to work with the international community. All donor countries, financial institutions and the Peacebuilding Fund needed to start work on the mapping process and quick-impact projects, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and the General Assembly. Guinea-Bissau's readiness to present its own priorities was also positive in terms of national ownership of the peacebuilding process.

22. While his delegation supported the addition of Guinea-Bissau to the Commission's agenda, it did not accept the imposition of conditions by the Security Council. In that regard, the approach agreed upon in informal consultations should be adhered to.

23. **Mr. Løvald** (Norway) said that his country looked forward to cooperating actively with Guinea-Bissau on pressing peacebuilding priorities. He hoped that the addition of Guinea-Bissau to the Commission's agenda would inspire other Member States to engage in collaborative partnerships with the Commission.

24. **Mr. Crowley** (South Africa) said that his country, in its capacity as Chairman of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, had worked closely with the latter country at both the bilateral and the multilateral levels and hoped to continue that engagement in the future. Welcoming the action taken by the new Government in recent months, he underlined the importance of national ownership of the peacebuilding process, which would be driven by the Government with the collaboration of the Commission. He hoped that such collaboration would help to put Guinea-Bissau on the path to sustainable peace and stability. Referring to comments made by previous speakers, he said that the Security Council's letter to the Commission was not intended to be prescriptive and he welcomed the clarification provided by the representative of Ghana in that regard.

25. **Mr. Amieyeofori** (Nigeria) said that his country, as a fellow member of ECOWAS with Guinea-Bissau, particularly welcomed the inclusion of the latter country in the Commission's agenda. Nigeria had consistently engaged with Guinea-Bissau, including in the context of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group and the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau. The Commission should be able to engage quickly with Guinea-Bissau, given that a poverty alleviation strategy was already in place and the Government had amply demonstrated its commitment. At the same time, national ownership of the process was vital.

26. **Mr. Simanjuntak** (Indonesia) said that the Commission would be able to provide valuable inputs for the implementation of various reforms and quick-impact projects in Guinea-Bissau. Five months had passed since the receipt of the Government's letter requesting the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the Commission's agenda; collaboration with the Government should therefore proceed as a matter of urgency. The Commission was entitled to amend the priority areas suggested by the Security Council or to suggest new ones as it saw fit, in coordination with the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

27. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) said that, given the constructive role played by the delegation of Guinea-Bissau from the very outset of the Commission's work, it was fitting that the Commission had responded promptly to the request to place Guinea-Bissau on its agenda. He noted the serious constraints which Guinea-Bissau faced, in particular the threat posed to its territorial integrity by drug-trafficking and organized crime, phenomena with which Caribbean countries were also familiar. One important means of tackling such problems was to provide alternative employment for young people.

28. The assistance of the entire international community would be required in order to consolidate peace in Guinea-Bissau, and his delegation endorsed the initial priorities that had been identified in that regard. He agreed that quick-impact projects were needed in order to inspire confidence in the international community's ability to respond to the urgent situation on the ground. Having welcomed the comments made by the representatives of Ghana and South Africa with regard to the Security Council's letter, he expressed agreement with the view that the Government of Guinea-Bissau should bear primary responsibility for outlining priorities. The Commission's task was to begin its mapping exercise as soon as possible.

29. **Mr. Meurs** (United States of America) said that the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the Commission's agenda would be beneficial both for that country and for the Commission, since it would allow for the development of new modes of engagement. It was

important for the Commission to demonstrate that it had momentum in order to encourage other countries to request inclusion in its agenda in 2008 and 2009.

30. In view of the shortage of resources in Guinea-Bissau and the acute nature of many of the problems it faced, he agreed that the Commission should focus on quick-impact projects. Such projects would also help to streamline the Commission's work so that its agenda could be expanded in the coming years. The Commission must find new ways of working so that a tangible impact could be achieved quickly on the ground. Time spent defining the Commission's priorities in Guinea-Bissau would mean less time spent on marshalling international support and ensuring coherence among all the stakeholders involved. The Commission's record in that regard was not good: the Governments of both Sierra Leone and Burundi have expressed concern about the amount of time it had taken for the Commission to become established and to define its integrated peacebuilding strategies approach.

31. The Security Council's letter to the Commission was based on a decade of engagement with Guinea-Bissau on peace and security issues and reflected a consensus on the key challenges to be addressed in achieving long-term sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau. At the same time, a medium-term approach would probably be needed so that the Commission could develop a holistic view of the situation in Guinea-Bissau. His delegation would be flexible on both those fronts, but it encouraged all Commission members to see the Security Council's letter as a reasoned and sensible approach to the situation in Guinea-Bissau that would facilitate a quick-impact response to the often desperate situation of ordinary people in that country.

32. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh), expressing agreement that the Commission should focus on quick-impact projects in Guinea-Bissau, said that the notion of responsibility emphasized by the delegation of Guinea-Bissau would be crucial to efforts to consolidate the peace that the country deserved. His delegation looked forward to contributing to those efforts.

33. **Mr. Deruffe** (France) said that the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the Commission's agenda was timely, given the generally acknowledged urgency of the situation in the country, and demonstrated the international community's determination to support peacebuilding efforts there. The Commission must now focus on achieving concrete results and improving the situation on the ground. A number of mechanisms were already in place to support Guinea-Bissau, such as the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, of which France was a member. Steps should be taken to improve cooperation between the Contact Group and the Commission.

34. **Mr. Barbeiro** (Guinea-Bissau), having welcomed the decision to include Guinea-Bissau in the Commission's agenda, expressed appreciation for the international community's unanimous expression of will to help the country overcome the problems it had faced since the end of the armed conflict. He also welcomed the election of the Ambassador of Brazil to the office of Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Guinea-Bissau, given the strong cultural, historical and economic ties between the two countries. He agreed that priority should be given to quick-impact projects so as to achieve a tangible improvement of the situation. His Government would fulfil the role which the Security Council and the Commission expected of it by taking steps to establish stability in Guinea-Bissau and to set the country on the path to development. The Government and people of Guinea-Bissau were united with the Commission members in their desire to achieve the precious goal of peace.

35. **The Chairperson** said that he would respond in due course to the letter from the President of the Security Council, conveying the decisions taken by the Organizational Committee at the current meeting and indicating that the Peacebuilding Commission would remain in close contact with the Security Council on the issue of Guinea-Bissau

Other matters

36. **The Chairperson** said that, in consultation with relevant parties, agreement had been reached on a proposed arrangement for the participation of the European Community in country-specific meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission. The representatives of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and of the European Commission would have two seats at the table behind a single nameplate bearing the title "European Community", and would act and speak as one delegation. The proposed arrangement was unique to the format and purposes of the Commission's country-specific meetings and neither replaced nor prejudged any existing arrangements in other

configurations within the Commission or in any other organ of the United Nations. He took it that the Organizational Committee agreed to the proposed arrangement for the participation of the European Community in country-specific meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission.

37. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.